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President's summary

Preparatory process for the fourteenth session of the Conference
(Agenda item 8)

1. Under the agenda item, the President of the Board informed member States that the substantive theme and sub-themes for the Conference had been approved following the conclusion of the silent procedure on 22 September 2015. He noted that the agreement had been reached on the understanding that the issue of women and youth would form a part of the outcome of UNCTAD XIV. The President further noted that the Preparatory Committee for UNCTAD XIV, formally established during the session, would be tasked with the substantive matters of the preparatory process.

2. The representative of Peru made a statement, providing a formal and detailed clarification to the Board of the reasons of force majeure that had obliged his Government to determine that it could no longer host UNCTAD XIV. The decision taken responded to a unique and unforeseen situation and would ensure that the Conference could take place satisfactorily in another host country. The Government of Peru profoundly regretted the setbacks that this extraordinary decision could bring and expressed thanks for the many indications of respect and solidarity conveyed.

3. The President of the Board presented his proposed work programme for the Preparatory Committee, which aimed at maximizing participation and minimizing the possibility of simultaneous meetings, and called on regional group coordinators to help to foster transparency and openness. While the recent announcement on the venue made clear that a slight delay would be inevitable in the Conference dates, the organization of work was intended to ensure a good outcome for UNCTAD XIV. He would prepare a "zero draft" as the basis for moving the forward negotiations towards a strengthened UNCTAD and ensuring its rightful and necessary role in realizing the objective of prosperity for all. The zero draft would be based on position papers to be prepared by the various regional groups; position papers from individual delegations were also welcomed. Other inputs would include the report of the Secretary-General to UNCTAD XIV and relevant outcomes from global conferences and summits.

4. He planned to convene a meeting of the Preparatory Committee on 10 November 2015, to provide an opportunity to regional groups and delegations to present their position papers. Informal meetings could be held after to clarify the respective position papers. The UNCTAD secretariat could also organize additional information sessions as needed to address specific technical questions. The goal would be to have the zero draft ready by the end of November 2015 and to present it to the Preparatory Committee on 7 December, thus allowing member States and regional groups adequate time to prepare for the first reading. The expectation was that the first reading could take place in early January 2016.

5. He recognized that, as delegations would not be in a position to comment on the proposed work programme during the current Board session, the first session of the Preparatory Committee would take place on 2 October 2015 in anticipation that they could agree on the proposed work programme for the first phase of the preparatory process. At that first meeting of the Preparatory Committee, delegations would also be able to make general statements on their respective visions of UNCTAD XIV and its outcome.

6. The representatives of many regional groups expressed their readiness to engage in the discussions and negotiations under the preparatory process, with a view to a successful UNCTAD XIV outcome. They said that the agreement on the theme and sub-themes for the

Conference had shown good faith and reflected collaboration and constructive engagement. Some regional groups noted their general agreement with the proposed first reading of the draft zero outcome document in January 2016.

7. The representative of one regional group stated that, in the move from negotiation towards consensus-building, the fact that disagreement was an essential ingredient of agreement had been forgotten. UNCTAD had been created specifically for intergovernmental deliberation, negotiation, decision and action. In assuring its regional group partners that issues of importance to them would be included in the outcome document of the Conference, based on a constructive spirit, there was an expectation that issues of importance to developing countries would also be included, such that a substantive and candid discussion of key issues would contribute to true consensus-building. She hoped that the fourteenth session of the Conference would deliver on their ambitions and expectations. A stronger UNCTAD would lead to a stronger multilateral system. The representative of another regional group expressed a commitment to UNCTAD XIV as a means of bolstering the areas of its mandate, and in support of small island developing States and least developed countries, which would also enable moving from decisions to actions.